

THE QUIVER

Saturday, September 23, 1871.



"He found himself at length within the white, glaring walls of the little Indian town"—p. 305.

TRIED.

BY F. M. F. SKENE, AUTHOR OF "A STORY OF VIONVILLE."

CHAPTER LII.

YES! the third hour of her mortal trial was surely come; and May Bathurst felt unmistakably that it was so, as through the long hours of that momentous night she wrestled with her own heart so strong in its passionate love, and compelled herself to look the truth in the face.

How thankful she now felt to the preacher for the warning which had saved her from yielding to the

first wild impulse of intense feeling evoked by Sydney's words! That moment of deadly peril at least was past, and in calm and solitude she was able to sift the question in all its bearings, and see clearly how she was required to act as the servant of Him to whom she was irrevocably resolved to be faithless no more. What was it that Sydney asked her to do?—To bind herself to one who was an open and determined infidel, in a union so close that it would make her, to use the forcible words of Scripture, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; to place him as master over her household and estate; to invest him with all the influence which in such a position he would exercise amongst those who were dependent upon her; to subject her own faith, God's most precious gift, to daily poisonous contact with an intellect that owned him not; to testify henceforward all her life long that the religion of Christ was virtually to her a thing of nought, since she identified herself absolutely with one who waged deliberate war against it. Surely there was not a doubt that nothing could ever justly such treachery in her who, through the cross of Calvary alone, hoped for an entrance, beyond the gates of death, into the Paradise of the pure in heart? Yet the temptation that assailed her was fearfully strong; it came to her in the most alluring guise it could possibly assume, for it pleaded with her, not for her own happiness alone, but for Sydney's. Although she well knew that to have yielded to his prayer would have been to ensure to herself that intense joy in his continual presence which had been her dearest desire since first, ten years before, she had given up to him her young, deep love, still she had gauged the value of earthly bliss, so far as she was herself concerned, and she knew that one moment of rest in the love of Christ was worth all that the cup of mortal life could ever hold of sweetness and delight; but that Sydney, for whose happiness she had ever yearned with such unspeakable longing, should come to her with failing health and broken existence, bereaved and desolate, to ask her to give him the last and only solace he could know, in a peaceful home with her and his child, and that she should fling him back to linger, hopeless and lonely, a little while, and then die for want of care and quiet—this did indeed seem to her a fiery torture which she could not go through and live.

How she paced her room hour after hour of that terrible night, almost maddened by the dire conflict!

May Bathurst, like a true woman, would have been brave as a lion, if by personal suffering she could have benefited the man she loved, but she was the most utter coward before the prospect of having to inflict upon him a single pang, or even to withhold from him the happiness she had it in her power to bestow. Again and again during that trying vigil she said to herself that she could not do it. She could not send him away from her to perish,

lonely and untended, without a joy in this world or hope in the next. Would it not be well, even for his soul's sake, that she should remain with him? Who would try to bring him back to the faith he had abandoned if she deserted him? With a thousand sophistries of this description she sought to blind herself; but her honest, truthful conscience ever flung them away, and compelled her to acknowledge that they were but mists between her and the light.

The first faint dawn of morning found May just as hopelessly confronted with the terrible difficulty of her position as she had been when Sydney's pleading words were sounding in her ears; for the plain truth was, while she knew and admitted she would be false to her religion if she yielded to his wishes, she yet failed utterly in the power to refuse him.

Wearied out at last, she flung herself down at the open window, and leant out to let the fresh breeze cool her burning head. Unconsciously she turned her gaze towards the east, and in spite of her anxiety of mind, she became absorbed in watching the magnificent spectacle of the sunrise, which was being exhibited there in all its summer splendour.

The sky was perfectly cloudless, and the herald rays had glorified it with the most exquisite hues, of opal and rose colour, while still the earth lay bathed in shadows and in stillness. Then suddenly a speck of intense light appeared on the line of the horizon, and in a few minutes more the ruler of the day had burst upon the world in radiance too dazzling for the sight of human eyes, and the whole earth seemed to break forth into singing, for instantly the woods grew musical with sweet bird voices, and the dew-gemmed flowers, and sparkling streams, and waving branches of the glistening trees shone out in a thousand forms of loveliness, all speaking of that ceaseless adoration of the light which is Nature's untaught worship. May gazed on the sight with earnest thoughtful eyes, for even as she looked on it, there seemed to rise before her spirit a vision of that resurrection morning, which at the close of this world's probation shall burst on its countless tombs in the life-giving dawn of a deathless day. Then, she knew, not birds and trees and flowers would welcome an earthly sun, but the long-buried legions of the Lord's redeemed would rise from out the heaving sods to meet the Sun of Righteousness himself, and in the effulgence of his Living Presence receive their new birth to immortality! She, too, would be present at that last glorious sunrise; she, too, should look on Him who last was seen on the Mount of the Ascension, when the white-robed angels promised those who stood gazing after Him into heaven, that they should see Him come again in like manner as they beheld Him go! In like manner, therefore, with hands outstretched in blessing, even as He departed, manifesting thus the love which the many waters of death could not quench, nor the many centuries of waiting time diminish; and she must

meet those eyes too pure to behold iniquity, and render up account before their searching scrutiny of all her earthly past.

Under the strong impression of the moment, May almost began to plead aloud with her Judge, that if she had failed in this her third trial, it had been for Sydney's sake alone—for his well-being—for his peace—for his very life, perhaps, and in no sense for any joy or comfort to herself; and as she thus half prayed, half thought, a strange thing happened to her, for it seemed to her as if through the pure morning air there thrilled a deep, mysterious voice that whispered to her spirit, "Couldst thou not have trusted him to my love?" Her very heart seemed to stand still to listen, and as the meaning of the calm solemn words made themselves known and felt through her whole being, she bowed her head upon her hands and said, "It is enough!" For to that Divine love she could indeed trust him, how far better than to her own weak, erring, short-sighted affection! Yes, her course was now made plain before her eyes; she would do that which was clearly, indisputably right; she would part from Sydney, and to the love that died for him upon the cross she would safely trust him.

When May Bathurst had come to this final resolution, a great calm passed into her soul, and after a little time she lay down to rest her wearied frame, and soon she was sleeping in a tranquil slumber, while from her closed eyes welled the tears that, waking, she would not have shed for her willing sacrifice.

The night was past, and May rose at her usual time, but she felt that she could not meet Sydney in the presence of others, so she persuaded Mrs. Denton that it would not injure her for once to be her substitute at the breakfast-table, while she herself remained in her room till the household had dispersed to the various employments of the day.

Then she went down to the library, which Sydney always occupied in the forenoon, and stood for some minutes at the door, trembling with intense emotion, before she could summon courage to enter the room. At last, with a strong effort, she turned the handle and went in.

Sydney was seated near the table with a book in his hand, but he seemed to be listlessly turning over the pages without paying much attention to the subject, and as May paused a moment unseen to look upon him, a great pang went through her heart at the manifest tokens of ill health on his beautiful countenance, which, anxious as she had felt about him, she had never so clearly recognised before. Ah! it was hard to forego the exquisite consolation of tending that failing, precious life, but her resolution did not falter; she went slowly forward and stood before him.

He started from his seat at sight of her, and flung

aside his book, while his face grew radiant with delight.

"My May," he exclaimed, "I have been waiting for you so anxiously! It was too cruel of you to run away as you did last night, without giving me an answer; but I comforted myself with the conviction that you would not have kept me in suspense if you had meant to disappoint me."

"Indeed, indeed I would not if I could have helped it," she said, with bitter pain in her trembling tones. He gave a glance of quick surprise at her white, sorrowful face, but he would not believe it possible she could ever mean to fail him, and taking her hand gently he said, "Well, you have come to give me joy and comfort now, my darling, have you not? You will forgive me all the past, and restore me to the true sweet love which will make all that remains to me of life so blest?"

"Oh, Sydney, I cannot!" she said, in a voice of utter anguish, and her very life seemed to go out from her with the words, so that she sunk down faint and trembling on a sofa standing near her.

For a moment he looked at her in complete amazement, then flinging himself into a chair by her side, he grasped her hands in his, exclaiming, "You cannot! May, what does this mean? Is it possible that you still harbour resentment for my former faithlessness—can it be that one of your generous nature would seek to be revenged?"

"No! no!—a thousand times no. How can you suppose it for a moment?"

"Then why do you say you cannot be my wife? May, is it that you have ceased to love me? If it be so, I have been presumptuous indeed, and cruelly deceived. I will own to you, May, that knowing I once was dear to you, I dared to believe your pure, true heart had held its constancy unshaken, even through the shock of my unworthiness—that in all this false and fitful world you at least knew how to be faithful and unchanging. Nor was it only from my own too great arrogance I derived this blessed hope; Fleming once told me how he failed to win you for this very reason, and I know that since then many have tried in like manner to gain your affections, and have been repulsed: therefore I dared to believe that you could love me still—that even my hateful conduct could not quench the tenderness of a heart like yours. Have I been utterly mistaken, May?" he added, with a mournful intonation which caused her exquisite pain.

"No, indeed you have not!" she exclaimed impulsively. "I do love you, Sydney; I have no wish to deny it. I love you as I have ever done, from the first happy hour when I gave myself to you, and still, through all the changes and the trials of the last few years, and now, at this moment, I know too well you are dearer to me than ever; yet, though my very heart is breaking within me, I must say the words—I cannot be your wife."

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"But why, my darling—why? What possible reason can you have for a determination so cruel to me and to yourself?"

"Only this," she said, very softly, "that when I first agreed to bind my life to yours in former years, I did a deadly wrong to my own soul: for your sake I was false to the love which alone should rule my being—the love of Him who died for me. In His pity, He withdrew you from me, and set me on the straight course of faithful obedience to Himself once more; and now again, in this supreme hour, He lets me be tried with the dreadful choice of final separation from you, my dearest upon earth, or a deliberate failure in the allegiance due to Him, and I cannot waver in my decision for a moment; I will never more be false to Christ."

Sydney's expression changed to one of deep despondency, as he sat for a few moments gazing on her in silence, after she had finished speaking.

"It is, then, because I am a freethinker that you reject me, May."

"It is because you have declared yourself the enemy of my Lord," she answered, weeping.

"And do you mean to tell me that for the sake of your belief in an unseen Being and in an eternal future, which may be but a dream, you are prepared to destroy all your happiness in this world, as you have shown me it will be destroyed, if we are parted?"

"Shall I not suffer for Him who suffered so dreadfully for me?" she answered softly.

Sydney continued to gaze at her with keen, searching eyes. To him, the careless infidel, the man who never looked beyond this life, it was an inexplicable problem, that a weak, loving woman should for a mere untangible theory, as he considered it, enter with such strong heroism on an absolute martyrdom. He almost forgot his personal interest in the issue, while he tried by every test to prove the reality of this wonderful faith.

"You were ever disposed to victimise yourself, May, but are you prepared for this transcendental scruple of conscience to sacrifice me also—whom you say you love? Do you know what will be the result on my life of this rejection? You have become dearer to me than ever you were in our happiest days—dearer far than the poor sweet child who won me from you for a time. You are all the world to me now, and without you life will be a hopeless blank—an intolerable burden which I shall be at no pains to preserve in the future. If you persist in your cruel determination, I shall go away from you this day never to see you again, and I shall straightway plunge into the wildest excitement I can find in order to draw my thoughts away from you, and then very gladly welcome the death to which such a course will surely bring me speedily. Are you prepared for such a result—my May, you, who tell me that you love me?"

"Oh, Sydney, do not torture me!" she said, gasping in her pain. "If only I might die for you—oh, how gladly would I die to make you happy! but even for you I dare not sin."

He was silent for a few minutes, then he said abruptly, "May, of course you understand that if you part from me you part from Chione too. Since this poor little child is the only being upon earth to whose affection I have a right, I shall take her with me, though it will be to an existence most unfit for her."

May started at these words, and tears came into her burning eyes; but she only answered gently, "It must be as you will. I know there is a better care than mine over you and her."

Sydney rose, and began to pace to and fro, buried in deep thought, while May rested her aching head upon her hand, feeling almost stupefied by the intensity of her suffering.

At last Sydney came and stood before her. "May," he said, "who gave you this indomitable faith?"

She looked up at him, and saw that he was asking the question with keen interest. "God first," she answered, "for faith is his gift alone; but after him, it is to Philip Evans, the preacher, that I owe my comprehension of the truth in which I am so thankful to believe."

"Evans, the missionary, who has gone out to India—Fleming's friend?"

"Yes; he has been to me almost like a messenger from the other world: if ever I win the rest of Paradise, it will be through his teaching."

Again Sydney stood silent before her, deeply pondering. Then at last, like a man who has taken a great resolution, he raised his head, and said, "May, once more, is there no appeal from this terrible decision?"

She folded her hands, bowed her head, and answered, "None."

"Then let me thank you for the happiness you have given me in the past, though you can give me no more," he said very gently; "and keep my little Chione, May—at least I will not deprive her of the dear home which can never again be mine."

He bent down and kissed her forehead, and then, without allowing himself to look on her again, he turned slowly, and left the room.

CHAPTER LIII.

A FEW days later, and Sydney Leigh sat on the deck of a large East Indianman, as it ploughed its way through the waters with a speed that was bearing it swiftly from the English shores. Chunder sat at his master's feet, with his black eyes fixed in a searching manner on his face.

Sydney had left Combe Bathurst an hour after his interview with May, having made no attempt to see her again, or to do more than take a silent leave of

his child, as she lay flushed and smiling in her noon-day sleep.

He looked worn and desponding now; but there was a restless light in his large dark eyes, and often he glanced impatiently at the track of the vessel, as if it were moving far too slowly for his impatient desires.

After a long, earnest scrutiny of his countenance, the Hindoo spoke in his broken English: "Chunder very sorry to leave Missie May—missie good and beautiful—missie love Sahib Leigh—oh, more than Chunder can tell. Why Sahib leave her?"

Sydney looked down at him with a smile half sad, half amused. "You seem to know and understand everything, Chunder—there is little use in attempting concealment with you."

"Sahib tell Chunder, then, why he leave Missie May."

"I did not leave her," said Sydney, with a heavy sigh; "at least, it was by her will, not mine, that we are separated."

"But Missie May love Sahib," persisted the Hindoo.

"She loves her God better," answered Sydney.

Chunder pondered on these words for a very long time; then he said, slowly, "Missie May wanted Chunder to believe her religion; but he knew that Sahib Leigh laughed at it all, so Chunder think perhaps missie quite mistaken."

"Chunder," said Leigh, very earnestly, "you may be perfectly certain that she must have been right, and I wrong: you will do well to believe in her religion, if you can."

He rose and left the deck as he spoke, and the subject was never resumed between him and his faithful Hindoo throughout the whole long voyage; but Chunder thought of his words continually, with all the energy of his strangely-developed intellect. There was indeed much to surprise him in Mr. Leigh's proceedings at this time. He had not the least idea where they were to go when they reached his native land, or for what purpose his master was thus preparing to expose himself to the Indian climate, which had, as he well knew, tried his health so severely in former years. And he was greatly perplexed by Sydney's feverish impatience to reach his destination, and still more at finding that, when they did at last arrive at Calcutta, he would not wait there even one day for rest, but insisted on starting at once for a distant station in the interior of the country, where Chunder was told there were very few Europeans.

The distance was great to this apparently unattractive spot; but Leigh pushed on so rapidly in his urgent haste to reach it, that he was quite ill from fever and exhaustion when, after a long and fatiguing journey, he found himself at length within the white, glaring walls of the little Indian town. He had travelled all night, and though still early,

the heat was most oppressive. Flinging himself down on a mat in the first house to which he could gain access, Sydney told Chunder to go on without delay, and find the English teacher, who was, he knew, resident in this place, to whom he was to give the name of Leigh, and beg that he would come to him at once.

Chunder obeyed, and it was not long before a tall figure passed into the room, and a dark, stern face looked down with evident recognition on the traveller, as he lay exhausted on the floor.

Sydney raised himself upon his elbow, and lifting up to his visitor the eyes which mental anxiety had filled with a beseeching expression, he said, "Mr. Evans, I have come the whole distance from England to this place, to ask you to give me, if you can, the faith which has enabled a passionately-loving woman like May Bathurst to trample all the joys of earth beneath her feet. I have not believed in it hitherto, I cannot believe in it now, yet I am deeply convinced that it must hold the power of truth within it, or it could not have nerved her to slay her dearest hope, as she has done. It is time that I learnt to know it, if it can indeed shed any light for me upon the grave; for I am fast going thither, and death is terrible to me because of its utter hopelessness. Sir, will you teach me the secret of this faith, as you have taught it to her who for Christ's sake has shut me out from her home, though she loved me, as I know she did, so truly?"

"I will," exclaimed the preacher, while a gleam of exultation lit up his worn features. "So even in this life does God recompense his own! for if you are brought home to light and peace, it will be to that true heart a richer reward than all the happiness that life could offer, and she will have won it by her righteous sacrifice."

CHAPTER LIV.

"A LETTER for you, Mamma May," said little Chione, bounding in through the open window of the drawing-room, one bright morning about a year after Sydney Leigh's departure from Corbe Bathurst.

She had been playing on the lawn before the door when the postman came past, and even that important functionary could not resist the pretty wilful ways of the beautiful child, who insisted on taking the letter from him, that she might deliver it herself to Miss Bathurst.

"Put it on the table, darling, and I will look at it presently," said May, who was patiently helping Mrs. Denton to extricate her work from the state of confusion into which she succeeded in bringing it at least half-a-dozen times in the day. May's smile was as sweet as ever, when she spoke to the child, but it vanished very speedily, and her face resumed its habitual expression of quiet sadness and grave earnest thought, which showed that the past year of

her life had been one of no common trial to her, though she had never allowed a murmur to escape her lips.

From the hour when Sydney Leigh left her home after her final rejection of him, she had never heard a single word respecting him, and she had not the slightest idea where he was, or what he was doing.

So far as she herself was concerned, she was perfectly contented with the tranquil, useful life she had led since then, but it was impossible that her thoughts should not dwell with constant anxiety and distress on Sydney after the painful circumstances of their separation, and it required all her submission and trust to enable her to go on from day to day without allowing her secret fears to disturb the resolute calm of her aspect.

When Mrs. Denton's knitting was at last put in order, she asked May to ring for her maid that she might be taken to her room; for the good lady had

now established a wheel chair in which she was moved from place to place, in spite of the undoubted fact that she was perfectly able to walk. May did as she wished, and when she was left alone, she took up the letter Chione had brought her, and carelessly opened it, expecting to find a few lines from one of her neighbours in the country; but a stifled cry burst from her lips, when she suddenly recognised the handwriting, and she could scarcely master her agitation sufficiently to read the words it contained. It was dated from an hotel in London, and consisted only of the following lines, written apparently with pain and difficulty:

"DEAREST MAY,—Will you let me come home to Combe Bathurst to die—I hope the death of a Christian? Do not refuse me this one request, for the only earthly wish I still retain is to be with you and my little Chione at the last.—Yours ever,

"SYDNEY LEIGH."

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE FEET OF JESUS.

CHAPTER VII.—THE PLACE FOR INDIVIDUAL SORROW.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE 'I WILLS' OF THE PSALMS," ETC. ETC.

"Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."—John xi. 32.



HEN the wind agitates the surface of a lake, in whose placid waters were reflected the mountain-sides in their strength and the sky in its beauty, their images first become broken and confused, and finally disappear.

The real mountains are there, strong as ever; and when the waters become smooth again, they will appear as they did before; but for a moment they are gone.

This is an apt image, in some respects, of what happens in our own spiritual lives. Circumstances arise which agitate us for a season, and all our tranquillity seems gone; we are no longer ourselves, we do not act in harmony with the habit of our past lives. We are wanting to our higher selves, and have to endure all the troubles which belong to an agitated state.

But in a true character there are all the elements of restoration; the strong mountains are really there; they will reassert their existence as soon as the storm is past.

Here we come upon a scene of agitation and distress; and, as is so often the case, precisely where we should not have expected to find it. We should have thought that Mary would have presented us with nothing but a picture of calm. Having seen her sitting at the feet of Jesus, when Martha was so disturbed, we should have been pre-

pared to take our lesson from her in such a scene as this, in the direction of calmness, and self-possession, and peace, but it is just here, as it is in so many instances in the teachings of God, we are led by ways which we know not, the teaching comes to us in a very different way from what we expected.

We have been taught by Mary's sitting, now let us learn from her falling, at Jesus's feet.

Every verse of this narrative is full of teaching—its own distinctive teaching; but we shall confine ourselves to such thoughts as suggest themselves in immediate connection with the position in which we find Mary here.

We shall first note what immediately preceded Mary's going forth to meet Jesus; and then her words and her position at his feet.

When Martha called Mary secretly she arose quickly, and without confiding to any of the attendant mourners the reason for her acting so suddenly, as well as with such haste, she left the house. Those who mourned with her must have been astonished, but they were not long in finding out a probable cause for her conduct. She was seized with a paroxysm of grief, which could be relieved only at the tomb, by the nearest possible approach to the dead.

Here, as in the case of Jairus's daughter, we have a strong contrast between the many and the one—the impotence of the many—the omnipotence of

the one. All that the minstrels and people could do in the one case was to make a noise; all that they could do in the other was to go after the heart-wounded one to a grave, but in each case Jesus brought with him life: for that which we can only mourn, he can restore.

Many Jews, we are told, came to comfort Mary. No doubt they were sincere in their desire to mitigate her sorrow—each had his own argument, his own aspect of comfort to present, or at least his own reason why sorrow should be assuaged; perhaps there were even some who knew the mystery of silence, and were able to sit still, and speak not a word, save such words as looks, and the mere consciousness of the presence of sympathy can utter; but they had evidently been able to do but little, for when Mary rose hastily to go forth and meet Jesus, they thought her grief had mastered her, and that she was going to vent it at the tomb.

There is something, no doubt, pleasing in the thought, that rays of human sympathy should converge from a wide circumference upon one focus of sorrow. It minds us of our common humanity, that in the depths (whatever surface distinctions there may be) human kind are one; that, as the poet says, "one touch of nature makes us all akin;" and no doubt all sharing of each other's joys and sorrows, will prove helpful so far to our rejoining some myriad threads of our humanity which are broken or cut in all directions; still sad thoughts connect themselves with "the one" in sorrow and "the many" comforters. For what the heart craves in the depth of its sorrow is not to spread itself out to many, but to gather itself in and hold companionship with but few. Deep streams run in narrow watercourses.

There is indeed a brawling noisy sorrow which from its very shallowness is heard here and there and everywhere, but it is different from what Mary had here.

Her heart, doubtless, sat loose to all the comforters around, and so was all the more ready to leap forth to Him who had her truest deepest sympathy—who, because He had in His keeping all the secret springs of her being, could comfort her indeed.

Now, whilst we would be far from undervaluing or casting off human sympathy, we cannot but feel conscious that it is well to sit loose to it—or, let us put the matter in another form; we cannot but feel how little in the hour of our sorest need it can do for us. It is precious in its place; but we shall remain unsatisfied if we have no more.

Mary knew of One who was superior to all combined, and when He came near, she was ready immediately to leave all around, and go forth to Him. No doubt, the previous knowledge of the feet of Jesus was silently exerting its power.

Those feet at which she had sat, had now approached her house; they were standing waiting for her, not very far off; she was going forth on no experimental journey—they said she was going to the grave to weep there, but she was going not to the home of death, but to the Lord of life.

It is true they were right in one respect, she was going "to weep;" but it was one thing to weep simply at a grave, it was another to do so before the Lord of life. We may weep before each; but, which it is, makes a vast difference indeed.

But we are anticipating. What we desire for the reader is, not only that he should be visited by Jesus, in the time of his sorrow, but that when Christ comes to him it should be as One well known.

Many have made their first acquaintance with Jesus in this sad time; they are happy in having done so; but they are not the happiest of all. They are happier still who have met him in sorrow as a well-known friend.

And for this very reason amongst others, let us now like Mary sit at the feet of Jesus, so that he may come to us as a known friend in our sorrowing times; so that we may not have to say, "Who is this that is come—who is this that is calling us out of ourselves?" but, "It is Jesus; I will go forth at once to him."

And of how much—what a wonderful much can we dispense, if we have Christ himself. Mary could leave all her friends for him. As Jesus had meat to eat that his disciples knew not of, so Mary had a Friend at hand, whose friendship was such as they knew not of.

If, then, in our times of sorrow and trial we would not be perhaps helplessly dependent on mere human sympathy, let us strive so to sit at Jesus's feet, that his coming to us at these sad times may draw us to him at once. However Jesus may choose to act for us, we must leave altogether with him—only we may be sure that, if we know him, and are ready when he calls for us to go forth unto him, it will be always a leaving of a company of mourners to go into the presence of the Lord of life.

"She goeth unto the grave to weep there."

The many Jews had come to comfort. They recognised the deep need, which now, however, it seems they are not able to supply. Mary's grief has overflowed their resources; she apparently goes to the tomb to weep there.

These friends of Mary spoke according to the probabilities of the case, doubtless according to what under similar circumstances they would have done themselves. They did not know that Mary was called for by Jesus; nor if they had known ~~it~~, could they have told how much was involved in it.

Those who do not know our connection with Jesus, do not know our resources. Their thoughts end with the natural; they can go all the length to which that reaches, but not further.

To those comforting Jews there was no point beyond that grave of Lazarus—there was no alleviation beyond weeping there. The dead was beyond all reach, but the sorrow which mourned for him might find a home at his grave. But whatever they said, Mary does not appear to have heeded it; one thought filled her mind, and quickened her steps, that was to get into the presence of the Lord.

And now Mary has hasted and come with her grief to Jesus; and what she does is to fall at his feet—to weep—and to cry that had he been at Bethany her brother had not died.

What Mary said and did at those feet is full of teaching to us.

And first let us look at who it is that thus hastes and casts herself down at the feet of Jesus.

It is Mary—the calm, the contemplative, the self-possessed, the still one, who sat at the feet, who is now in such haste.

Those whom we think stillest are in truth often capable of emotion, activity, and excitement, which we should have thought utterly foreign to their nature. We often judge people as to what they possibly can do or leave undone, by the aspect in which they habitually present themselves to us, but we do not know how violently and in what an opposite direction they may be moved by circumstances.

In Mary's case there seems to have been a mingling of the natural and the spiritual—of intense human feeling, and also true spiritual sensibility. She went forth to meet Jesus, with both Lazarus and Jesus occupying chief places in her heart.

Would Jesus have had it otherwise? Would he have had her violate all the feelings of human nature; was he so jealous as not to leave any place even for the dead? did he expect her to think of him alone when he called for her, and when he saw her hastening to his feet? No; Christ is no stifler, but the regulator of human emotion; he had no blame for Mary; he received her as she came; he mingled his tears with hers.

Let us be careful how we form too decided an opinion about some who appear to us somewhat abstracted, and contemplative, and separated from the wear and tear of ordinary life. It by no means follows that their natural feelings and emotions are dead—that they cannot feel themselves, and feel for others. We do not know what people are, or are capable of, until the circumstances fitted to try them have occurred. When they do occur, we shall perhaps be surprised to find how full of emotion, or susceptibility to personal suffering,

or how capable of sympathy such and such a person is.

Moreover, let us never seek to be so contemplative, and rapt, as to be above human joy or sorrow. Whilst we are here God wills us to be men—true men, even as Jesus was. Rightly to show ourselves capable of human emotion is an infinitely truer position than to be independent or incapable of it. Neither let us seek a place at “the feet” with the idea of raising ourselves on high from affliction. We may seek a place there selfishly, from, perhaps unknown to ourselves, a low motive as well as a high one; for our poor hearts are liable to be deceived, and what is in itself very high may be turned to a very low use; the thing may be the same, but its aim and end altogether different.

In this respect the emotion of Mary on the present occasion is very precious, and it is made doubly so by that of Jesus. Mary wept, the Jews were weeping, Jesus weeps also.

It is important to observe that he has no chiding for those tears, and that impassioned falling at his feet. He has chiding for unbelief; for he presently says to Martha, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” (ver. 40.) It is not that he is so overcome as not to discern anything faulty which may exist; it is that within its true limits he owns the power of human sorrow as such.

And it is our belief that Jesus likes human feelings to be brought into contact with himself.

What kind of religion is that which says, “I will reverence Thee with the abstract, but I will keep from Thee with all that in which I most truly live, and move, and have my being?” That religion would not be the religion of our very selves, it would be unreal. Jesus would say, “You are weeping about an earthly trial, a wound to your affections, a loss, a difficulty, a want; and you are not coming to me; I am not in the reality of your daily life, but only in the creeds and abstractions of your spiritual.”

It must be either because we have mistaken notions about Christ, or are not sure of him, that we keep so aloof from him—that we do not rise up hastily and run to him, and fall at his feet in the passion of our souls, in the deep emotions of our life. If we knew him as well as Mary did, we should do as she did also.

But before we part with Mary's haste, let us note two things—(1) how she sped forth to the One to whom she could unbosom herself, as soon as she knew He was at hand; and (2) how quickly she left the many comforters for the One; that one being in Himself of more value than all the rest.

This speedy going forth was no experiment on Mary's part. From what she had heard from Christ, sitting at his feet, she knew that her sorrow



(Drawn by A. DE MOLINS.)

"The sunny rivulet sings and plays,
With bud and grass by winding ways"—p. 810.

would have a place in his heart; a secret sympathy existed between her soul and his, which did not between her and all the mourners around.

Now there is no one to whom we can fully unbosom ourselves but Jesus. All deep sorrow ramifies into strata below the surface soil of human sympathy. It gets into our spiritual being; it has other life connection with us, which none but He who is God can understand; and that we feel and know.

And in truth, though men do not always know it, that is why all mere human sympathy comes short. An unspiritual man may never know this, and so never seek for anything beyond the imperfect help of his fellow-man; but even a spiritually-

minded man may not know it either. He knows it not theologically, but he does instinctively—an instinct of his being makes him seek Christ; and in that One he finds what all "the many" could not supply.

Thus may it be with us in our deepest sorrowing times—may we feel that Jesus is able to penetrate into those depths of our being to which the sorrow reaches, and let us bring it to him as it is. Let us not wait until it be toned down and moderated, and as we should think be brought into a more seemly state for his presence; but let us come to him with our sorrows, as we must with our sins, bringing them just as they are.

(To be concluded.)

POET PLEASURES.

I.

THE sunny rivulet sings and plays
With bud and grass by winding ways,
Down to the wave-washed sand, and blows
The heavy-leaved rose;

The lily lifts its rain-bright vase;
Thus, through the long-drawn summer days,
Flow and bloom the poet's lays.

II.

The slightest things—the tinkling brook,
A memory of some olden book,
Bubbles or down that by him float,
Lights on the hills remote,

On the sea-line the white-sailed boat,
Into his fancy's chamber look,
From lark's song to returning rook.

III.

The leaden evening sky that lowers,
The snow that whirls in blinding showers,
The hail that rattles, rain that pours,
The tempest-hum of midnight shores,
The keen stars o'er the mouldering towers—
These find through winter's dolorous hours
An echo in his poet powers.

T. C. IRWIN.

THE CARVEN NAME.

"He that walketh uprightly walketh surely."—Prov. x. 9.

"MY good, brave lad! how shall I ever thank you?"

"I don't want thanks, sir, I'm sure," and there the boy stopped short, blushing, but looking very handsome and manly. He wanted to say "that what he had done was its own best reward;" but he was only a lad, not a bit readier at expressing himself in words than lads usually are, and receiving thanks and praise with quite as much awkwardness and confusion as if he had not deserved them. Indeed, he would have escaped from that elegant drawing-room some minutes before, with more haste than politeness, only, somehow, he wanted the little girl whom he had saved, half an hour ago, from a great peril, to look up at him again with her soft eyes, and bid him good-bye in her sweet child's voice.

Her face was hidden now on her father's shoulder, as she half leaned, half lay against his

breast; but she lifted it as George Elliot spoke, and looked earnestly at her father.

"Papa, dear, you would never have seen me again. In another minute we must have been over the cliff, for I couldn't hold Keely in any longer, and you know what they say of that dreadful sand underneath!"

"Hush, Rosalind! my dear, I can't bear it!" cried Mr. Lisle, clutching the little figure to his breast again. For an instant the horrible peril was not past; he saw it all over again, even while his little daughter was in his arms. He looked up in a minute or two with an unsteady smile at the honest blushing face of the lad who had rendered him such priceless service.

"You don't want thanks, and you shall not have them. I have no son, but from this time forward I shall think I have one in you. Are you satisfied, Rosalind?"

The little arms tightened themselves round his

neck by way of answer, and then the child turned from him, and walked up to her young preserver.

The candid blue eyes looked up at him earnestly, two little hands took his and held them, while she said in her sweet thrilling voice, and with a simplicity that somehow touched the boy more than her father's promise—

"I shall always remember how you saved me to-night. I shall never forget you!"

George Elliot walked homewards presently, thinking more of the pretty little girl he had saved from certain death, than of the possibilities opened to him by her father's gratitude—indeed, these were greater than the boy had any means of understanding. He did not trouble himself very much about them, though more than once that evening he said to himself with a sudden rush of thankfulness, "I'm glad I was there just at the right time;" and then there came a vision of the frightened flying pony, and the child's white face and appealing eyes turned wildly towards him.

"Thank God! I was there," he repeated.

But Mr. Lisle's promise, impulsively made, was amply redeemed as time went on. Circumstances rendered it easier of performance, perhaps, than was at first sight probable, for young Elliot was an orphan, and even without connections near enough to assert any right over the lad or his future. If he did not actually become an inmate of Mr. Lisle's house, that house was his home whenever he needed one. A choice of professions was offered him. He chose medicine, and entered on its study with every advantage that can belong to the only son of a wealthy and generous parent; and before very long Mr. Lisle became strongly attached to the young man he had befriended, partly because it almost of necessity happens that we love what we protect and foster, partly because young Elliot himself was so full of sweet and endearing qualities.

"The dear lad is almost of too sweet and pliant a nature for a man," Mr. Lisle said one day, half to himself, half to his daughter, as they turned from watching George ride away on his return to London after one of his frequent visits to Elmdale.

"Do you mean that George is weak?" asked Rosalind, no longer a little girl, but a slender, delicate damsel of sixteen or so.

"Weak, my dear; no, not weak, perhaps, but temptation comes nearly always in the guise of virtue to men like him, and sometimes I own I tremble for the lad. Don't look so shocked, my little girl. I am not prophesying anything very dreadful for our boy, only as we can't keep sons under our wings as we do our daughters, one longs to see them sufficiently armed for the battle always going on yonder," and he pointed to where London lay in the distance under its broad grey canopy.

Rosalind leaned against the balustrade of the terrace where they had been standing, and looked long and fixedly at that broad, dim, mysterious cloud on the horizon. To her, London was a place of broad streets, gorgeous shops, gaily-dressed people, that wearied while it pleased her, and from which she was always ready to return to her home amid the sweet woodland scenery of Elmdale.

But what was London to men, to George? Her father had often spoken vaguely of its temptations, and seemed to dread them for the young man who really almost filled a son's place in his affections. He was dear to Rosalind too, and the girl's wistful, yearning fancy was following him now into the striving, struggling world beyond the tender circle of home, as women's will, who have brothers, sons, or lovers to hope for, pray for, and part with.

"But I am not afraid," thought the girl presently, with a light in her blue eyes; "he is gentle—yes, but it is the gentleness of strength, not weakness. Papa will acknowledge that, if ever the occasion comes."

Ah! with what a tender rush of love, and pride and confidence, the words were whispered to herself; through what an agony of grief, pity, shame, of love unutterable, were they to be realised in the future!

And if, unconsciously to herself, George Elliot had gradually become the hero of the girl's tender fancy, she herself was no less his ideal of womanly perfection; but while Rosalind's dreams of the future were all sweet, and vague, and only half understood by herself, the young man's were definite, calmly confident, and happy. Looking back upon the past, he could not fix upon the precise time when Rosalind had passed from the little tenderly-loved sister, into the woman whom not to win for his wife, would render life henceforth only a round of duties, without grace or charm; but he could always point distinctly to the hour when his dreams took form and became purpose.

He was at Elmdale on one of his frequent visits, and a pleasure party had been formed to visit some ruins in the neighbourhood. After luncheon, the party broke up into twos and threes, and strolled here and there, through the sweet silent woods sheltering the grey old stones that had once been a stately castle. George Elliot was sauntering along a pretty moss-grown path, waiting for Rosalind, who had promised to join him in a search after some ancient tree, to which a legend pertained, when some one spoke on the other side of the thicket bounding the path.

"Where is dear Rosalind?" said a voice, which George knew to belong to a connection of Mr. Lisle's.

"With George, most likely," answered Mr. Lisle, placidly.

"Edward," resumed the first speaker, gravely; "do you think it quite prudent that Rosalind and a young man like George Elliot should be thrown so much together? Dear Rosalind is so young—and——"

"Do you mean there is some likelihood of the two forming an attachment? I hope there is. I know no one to whom I would so readily give Rosalind some day. Her marriage, then, would not take my darling from me," Mr. Lisle returned quietly.

When Rosalind joined George presently, she laughed at the start with which he turned when she put her hand within his arm, but somehow, and for the first time, she blushed and faltered under the look with which he took the little gloved hand in his, and held it a moment. Somehow, after that, the walk to the old tree was an unusually silent one, Rosalind thinking George very unlike himself—odd, constrained, and abrupt.

"Tell me the legend," she said, as they stood underneath the broad knotted boughs of the storied tree; and the young man obediently put into the background all his hopes and triumphant happiness, and obeyed.

"And ever since that time," said he, in conclusion, "people who visit this spot have cut the name dearest to them, on the old tree, for luck, as it is said. Look how the ancient bark is scored with names beloved! Rosalind, I must add mine."

And while Rosalind looked shyly on, George stepped upon the highest point the great twisted roots of the tree offered, and cut a name high above all others.

"Why do you put it up there?" said the girl, smiling. "It seems as if your favoured name was to be a secret from me, sir, for I can't see it."

"Partly so, and partly because it is my fancy that this name should be above all others, as its owner is above all the rest of the world to me."

It was some months after this little scene that George and Mr. Lisle, returning one evening from a ride, noticed the figure of a man, poorly dressed, lying apparently in a fainting condition by the roadside not far from the gates of Elmdale. They both alighted, to render what assistance was possible, and George's medical experience was sufficient to enable him to decide that the man was in the last stage of weakness and disease, and that all that could be done must be done quickly. Fortunately there was a spare room at the lodge near; to that Mr. Lisle had the unfortunate traveller removed directly, and waited George's report of what more was necessary to be done.

It was an autumn evening—still, soft, sad, and silent, and as Mr. Lisle sat alone in the little parlour of the lodge, listening to the murmur of voices in the room beyond, where George and the wife of

the lodgekeeper attended to the sick man, a strange sense of foreboding and oppression stole over him.

"How heavily the air weighs to-day," he thought, rising to open the little window half hidden by flowering creepers in all their autumn wildness and profusion. George entered at the same instant.

"The poor fellow is sensible now, but I am afraid is in a hopeless state. It seems he was on his way to Elmdale to see you, sir. He is from Australia, as far as I can make out."

"Australia!" repeated Mr. Lisle; and even in the grey evening light George could see how deadly pale he had turned. He hastened towards him.

"It is nothing; the room is strangely oppressive; that is all," said Mr. Lisle, faintly, in answer to the young man's concerned look and inquiries.

"What is this person's name?"

"Sutherland Harcourt," he says. "Strikes one as rather made-up, I thought."

"Sutherland Harcourt," repeated Mr. Lisle, hoarsely. "I won't believe it! it's some vile impostor! But wait here, George. I had better see the man." And he left the room hurriedly, leaving young Elliot full of wonder and perplexity, quite unable to account for the strong emotion Mr. Lisle had displayed over an apparently trifling circumstance.

The voices in the inner room reached him indistinctly. He leaned out of the window to avoid catching anything not meant for him, but in a few minutes Mr. Lisle himself hurriedly summoned him. Another deadly fainting-fit had come upon the sick man, in the effort apparently to rise from the couch where he had been laid, and all George's skill was needed before he showed any sign of returning life. "Another, so prolonged, would probably be fatal," George whispered to Mr. Lisle as he stood by. "In any case his life is not worth many days' purchase."

Mr. Lisle's hand was on the young doctor's shoulder as he spoke, it tightened then with a hard convulsive grasp, for a moment, and then he drew a deep breath as if some intolerable weight had been lifted from him.

"Shall I go?" asked George presently, as the man regained consciousness and seemed about to speak. But Mr. Lisle still kept his hand on his shoulder without other answer.

"You acknowledge me to be Sutherland Harcourt in the presence of this young gentleman?" said the man, fixing his haggard eyes on Mr. Lisle.

"Yes," he answered briefly.

"I could prove it easily enough if need were, but I dare say you see well enough I am not likely to live to dispute Elmdale with you; but, ah, Lisle! I have a son, and my claim passes to him, I see, by the will!"

Again the young man felt that pained, convulsive grasp upon his shoulder, and heard the agonised whisper, "My Rosalind! my Rosalind!"

"Lisle and I are cousins, you understand," the sick man went on, addressing George. "My father disinherited me in his favour, and I left England in consequence. After knocking about the world for years, I felt a longing to come back and find out whether a wife and son I left behind me were still living, and in London I went to Doctors' Commons to look at my father's will, just to see whether the old man might not have changed his mind at the last; and sure enough he had. Elmdale was to be mine if I reappeared, and here I am. Make me strong enough to move, doctor, if only for a few days. I must find my boy. Look here, all the particulars of his whereabouts are—I'm horribly faint again—lift me up, doctor——"

They raised him as he wished; they applied restorative after restorative, all in vain. They stood back from the low couch presently and looked in silence at the wan figure, and then at one another. A pocket-book, containing papers, had escaped from the breast of the dead man, and lay on the ground. This Mr. Lisle presently stooped and lifted, and then George, with a scared wonder, saw him walk deliberately up to the fire burning on the hearth, and push it among the lighted coals. To dash forward and seize it was the work of a moment.

"Let it alone!" said Mr. Lisle, hoarsely. "I do it for Rosalind and you."

"Oh, father!" the young man cried out in a passion of grief and horror, "do you think that Rosalind—that I—that your children would accept such service from you?"

"George, do you understand, that every acre, well-nigh every sixpence of mine, goes to the son of the man yonder, if he lives; goes to a boy who knows nothing of what he loses, and therefore cannot miss? While my Rosalind—just think of her, George, think of poverty for her—poverty that will almost be beggary! Think of that, and spare her—spare me, who have loved you as a son!"

He held out his hand for the book with an imploring gesture.

"I cannot! I cannot!" the young man cried passionately. Rosalind shall never know poverty. I will work for her, for you—gladly—proudly; but these papers are not mine, not yours, dearest father. This boy must be sought, must be found, if he lives. As honest men we have no choice."

"Go then!" said Mr. Lisle, desperately; "if you have the heart, put a stranger into the place of those who have cherished you, but henceforth we are strangers! All ties between us end here, and now!" and he rushed from the room, leaving the young man stupefied with grief and amazement.

He took the fatal pocket-book in his hand, went out from the presence of the dead, and, sitting down by the window of the outer room, tried to realise what had happened.

Years ago, a few minutes had sufficed to change the whole course of his life; had given him, a friendless lad, a home, dear friends, a prosperous future; now a few minutes had swept all these blessings out of his grasp, and more, oh! infinitely more, because they had taken from him Rosalind! And with the thought of Rosalind, a pang so keen, so tender, so full of despair smote the young man's heart that he hid his face in his hands and groaned aloud. To think that his should be the hand destined to smite her father so cruel a blow! that where he owed only love and kindness, he must bring sorrow and ruin, that through him, the woman he loved must face the bitter trials of poverty!

"And yet I have no choice!" groaned poor George. "When he comes to himself, my poor tempted father will see that and pardon me."

"He does that now, George," said a trembling voice through the darkness. "Oh, more—far more; he honours you, as—as I do."

"My son, my son, it is for you to forgive!" said Mr. Lisle, humbly, and when George caught his outstretched hands, the over-wrought man fell upon his neck and wept.

* * * * *

"The chain of evidence is quite complete. This gentleman can establish his identity as the son of the late Sutherland Harcourt in a court of law, without any difficulty," said the lawyer, fluttering over the papers that lay before him.

Mr. Lisle turned to the young man beside him, and grasped his hand without speaking. A few business details were arranged with the lawyer, and then the two left the office together.

"Truly God has been merciful to me, a sinner," said Mr. Lisle, presently, in a trembling voice. "I can scarcely yet believe that George Elliot and Sutherland Harcourt's son, the owner of Elmdale, are one!"

"Not the owner of Elmdale," said the young man. "I never knew any father but yourself, who have been father and mother both to me. I can only inherit Elmdale from you."

The tranquil autumn sunshine streamed through the boughs of an ancient tree on two figures lingering beneath.

"See, surely you can read it now, just there, with the sunlight on it. But I may add something now that I dared not then?"

And while the young wife stood looking on with her shy, tender smile, George Harcourt carved something beside the name on the old tree, and the sunshine glinted softly across the words—"My Rosalind."

J. R. M.

BRIDGET'S FIRST PLACE.

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

PART I.

THAD been a terrible winter; nothing but frost and cold, week after week, until the very energies of the poor seemed to be frozen within them. For the rich there were warm velvets and furs, roaring fires, luscious wines and meats, skating parties, and all sorts of enjoyments to drive away the fierce cold; but for those others that crowded together in narrow back lanes and streets there were rags and starvation, fireless grates and no work; and to them the long hard frost was more like a curse than a blessing.

There was one house in Carter's Yard, Hoyston, which had suffered frightfully during the long hard winter. The father was a bricklayer, and, as a matter of course, when the frost set in work was at an end. There were eight sickly children of a sickly mother, who had been bred in the country, and who from the time that she came to Hoyston had been gradually fading away in the smoke and the gloom. Hard work and want of food had undermined her constitution, so that when the cruel cold came she quietly took to her bed and died—plainly speaking, was starved to death. At this misfortune, the father became sullen and morose, wishing only for the time to come when he should be at rest from the miseries of a world where he had experienced so little of pleasure and so much of pain.

Before the winter was over, two little thin-faced children had joined their mother, leaving six children and the wretched man their father to live or die as they could. The two eldest girls—Bridget and Emma—managed, by dint of working night and day at their needles, to pay the rent of one small room and provide a daily crust of bread for the starving family.

But at last the frost broke up, and something of better fortune seemed to be dawning on these poor people. The father obtained a little irregular work, and Bridget heard of a situation as kitchen-maid at the college of Hoyston. She applied for it, and almost lost it because she had no one to give her a character; for although she was sixteen years old she had never been out to service, her mother having been too weak to attend to her large family herself. She told her story to the committee, who, having made inquiries, and found that it was true, decided to take her on trial without a character. So Bridget packed up her scanty wardrobe, kissed the children, gave poor hard-worked fourteen-years-old Emma a word or two of encouragement, and promised to send her some money as soon as she got it, bade her father a loving good-bye, and started for the college with a heart full of hope.

At first Bridget was very much awed by the grand dresses of the servants above her, and not a little ashamed of her own well-worn dress and jacket, that before she had thought would last her capitably for a long time yet; but by degrees this wore off, and the head cook—a woman who had had her share of adversity—having taken a great fancy to the new kitchen-maid, the others did not dare to laugh at or tease her, as they otherwise would have done. Besides the female servants, the college could boast of two footmen, one of whom was married, the other still single. To the latter, whose name was Jarvis, Bridget had taken a most unaccountable dislike. This was the more extraordinary as he was a general favourite, not only with his fellow-servants, but also with the head master and the committee themselves, who looked upon him as a most invaluable servant. To Bridget there appeared an expression so sinister about the man's mouth and eyes that she felt uneasy whenever she saw his face turned towards her, and she resolved from the first that she would avoid coming in contact with him as much as lay in her power.

So things went on very smoothly with Bridget for two months, and in only one more she would be taking her wages. She was sitting in the servants' hall, apart from the others, who were making merry round the huge fire, and thinking whether she should send her money straight home, or lay it out in garments for the little ones, when the gate-bell sounded, and in a moment more Jarvis, who had risen to answer it, returned, bringing with him the college post-bag. Having sorted the letters, and found that there were none for the doctor, Jarvis sat down with one in his hand, which he proceeded to comment upon satirically, to the infinite delight of his audience, who had tried in vain to find out to which of them it belonged. At last, however, he threw it into Bridget's lap, exclaiming, "There, Bridget Green, I suppose that belongs to you; I hope you'll be able to read it, for I couldn't, or else I should have given it to you before."

Bridget took up the letter, which was from Emma, whose handwriting certainly was extremely difficult to decipher. But the warm-hearted girl could not bear the taunt on her hard-working sister, who had never had the means of learning to write properly. Her face turned crimson, and she replied hotly, "How dare you, or any one else, make remarks upon my letters! You had no business to keep it from me, and I won't have my letters spied over by you." And then, taking the letter with her, she made her escape to her own little room, that she might read it in peace. The letter, however, did not tend to quiet her perturbed spirits.

"Father," Emma wrote, "has fallen from the scaffolding and broke his leg, and I am so busy with him that I can't manage to earn anything scarcely, and now his wages don't come in I don't know which way to turn, and haven't paid last week's rent, nor got the money to pay it with this week, and not so much as a bit of bread in the house. I suppose you couldn't let me have a little money till father gets better, and I can work again, which I wouldn't mention, but am afraid if the rent runs on much longer I shall never be able to pay it, and then we'll get turned into the streets, of which I am very much afraid."

This was a dreadful blow to Bridget, happening as it did just when she thought they were getting on so nicely. She had not a farthing of her own, nor would have for a month. What should she do? Only one thing, and that she did: took the letter to the kind cook, and asked her if she would lend her a few shillings, promising faithfully to return it the moment that she received her wages.

Cook lent her the money willingly, gave Bridget a few words of sympathy, and begged her not to mention the little transaction to anybody, for, she said, "it is against the rules to lend or borrow."

PART II.

THE day after Bridget posted her letter home to Emma, there was a hue and cry at Hoyston College. One of the young gentlemen had lost ten shillings in a most unaccountable way. He had taken the half-sovereign out of his desk, in order to pay for a cricket-bat that he had bought in the town; but suddenly remembering that he had left his purse in his locker in the class-room, he foolishly left the half-sovereign on the desk while he went to fetch the purse. The bell ringing when he was just about to run up-stairs, he was obliged to leave it there, which he did, thinking it would be quite safe, as all the boys were coming out of the playground into the schoolroom. However, when the morning classes were over, although the boys one and all returned to the playground, and he was the only one who went up into his dormitory, the money was gone. There was much consternation among the servants, especially the housemaids and wardrobe-keepers, as it was evident that suspicion must fall upon them. A kitchen-maid it could hardly affect, as she had nothing whatever to do with the upper regions of the house, except her own bedroom. In the course of the day many of the servants were had before the committee, and although nothing came out to direct particular suspicion to any one of them, they were all more or less gloomy and abstracted. The tea, which was generally such a cheerful meal, was being taken in silence, when a ring came at the kitchen bell. Bridget rose and opened the door. There, shivering in the cold, was a little half-naked child, who begged a crust of bread. Bridget thought of

her own little sisters, and running back to the hall, took up a large slice of bread and butter that lay on her own plate, and gave it to the poor little hungry child. When she came back to the tea-table, Jarvis exclaimed, "Hey, what's that! giving away bread and butter to beggars! Don't you know that's against the rules?"

"The poor child was starving, and it was part of my own tea that I gave her; I can do with a slice less."

"There's no provision of that kind in the rules," remarked Jarvis, pompously; and darting out of the hall, in a few minutes he returned, bringing the child and her half-devoured bread and butter with him.

"The committee happens to be sitting," he exclaimed, and marched the child into the committee room, and told his tale. Of course Bridget was sent for, and owned what she had done, when she was informed that it would be looked over this time, but that if she were found breaking the rules again, she would be dismissed. Thus Bridget was priding herself on her escape, when one of the gentlemen exclaimed, "Isn't this the girl we took without a character? If she would break one rule, she would break another. Perhaps she can tell us something about the half-sovereign."

It was a rule, which Bridget had never broken, that each servant should confine herself to her own appointed portion of the house; consequently Bridget had never even entered the boys' dormitory. This she distinctly stated, but the committee thought it their duty to examine her.

Nothing suspicious, however, was proved against her until Jarvis mentioned that, on the night before, she had received a mysterious-looking letter, which she had been very angry with him for looking at, and which she took up into her own room to read. The other servants were called up to corroborate this evidence, and the committee deemed it desirable that the letter should be produced.

Bridget's heart sank when she heard this, but she trusted to her own innocence and God's mercy to bring her safely through this trial. The letter was produced and read, and after the reading the committee shook their heads and looked very grave indeed, and said they must send for Emma Green. This accordingly they did, and without telling her of the suspicion against Bridget, they asked her if she had received any money from her sister. She replied, "Yes."

"When?" she was asked.

"This morning," was the answer.

"How much?"

"Half-a-sovereign," was the reply.

Poor Bridget. She hung down her head and coloured to hear how the suspicion was being driven home to her, and even this was taken as a sign of guilt. The committee looked very grave indeed

when they asked her where she had obtained that half-sovereign. Of course Bridget refused to say, for she would not for the world have broken her word to the kind cook, who, as it happened, was away from the college, having started early that morning, before the theft had been discovered, on a week's visit to a dying sister. So Bridget was ordered to pack up her clothes under the inspection of the matron, and leave the college at once without any wages, and think herself very fortunate that she had escaped imprisonment, which was only on account of her previous good behaviour. Moreover, Emma was ordered to return as much of the money as was not spent.

This untoward event plunged the unfortunate family into the most poignant distress. Not only were they already half starved, and in debt, but Bridget's time had been spent without gaining anything, and she was also in debt to the cook for the borrowed ten shillings. Of course she could not think of seeking another situation with such a blot upon her character, so she was obliged to take once more to her needle, and endeavour by sitting up through the whole night to keep the wolf from the door. She hoped that when the cook returned and heard the news she would clear her by telling that she had lent the money; but, as ill-luck would have it, the cook wrote at the end of a week saying that her sister was still on the verge of the grave, and begging another week. This the committee, which was composed of kind-hearted men, granted, thus deferring the time of Bridget's clearance.

At last, however, the cook returned, and before long learned from the servants the cause of Bridget's dismissal. Her indignation knew no bounds, and, as Bridget had hoped she would, she immediately went to the committee, and stated how that she had lent Bridget half-a-sovereign, thinking that in such a case an old trusted servant as she was might venture to break the rule, provided that she did not do it openly, so as to set a bad example to the others. This the committee did not see; they said the rules must be adhered to, so they fined her the small sum of one shilling, which she paid very cheerfully, and then started off to tell Bridget that she was to come back to her place as soon as possible.

But the excitement of the last week, added to the night work and scanty food, had told upon Bridget's delicate frame, and she was prostrated by a low fever, of which she must have died but for the timely aid of the kind cook.

On her way back, just as she was about to enter the college gates, the cook was accosted by a so-called gipsy, who importuned her to have her fortune told. The cook repulsed her angrily, when the old creature cried, "You needn't be so high and mighty wi' me; there's many better than you has to do wi' me. It's only the other day that I had ten shillings paid me down by one o' your young men,

because when I told him his fortune I said I saw theft in his hand, and he gave me the money to keep me quiet, and plenty more'll come, I'll warrant! But what a fool I am to say aught about it. It's just like me; I always was a fool."

The cook pounced upon the woman, and took her into the college. It not being a committee day, she was examined by the doctor, who saw at once that she had been indulging very freely in strong drink. She repeated what she had already said, and added that it was a lucky chance made her think of saying she saw theft in his hand, for it just happened to be the truth.

A strict investigation fastened on to Jarvis a system of petty theft, for which he was ignominiously expelled from the college; and Bridget, who, under the cook's kind care, soon recovered, was not only taken back, but in a very short time promoted to be under-housemaid, with increased wages.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

273. On three occasions only is it narrated that the communication of the Holy Spirit was attended by a visible sign. Give them.

274. There are in the Old Testament three instances of miraculous signs, which were to be signs after the occurrence of the event. Give them.

275. What passage from the Psalms is cited in the New Testament with the words prefixed—"As the Holy Ghost saith?"

276. Quote the only passage in St. John's Gospel in which the words "kingdom of God" occur.

277. Upon what motive did our Lord rest his maxims of exalted charity?

278. Quote a passage from Isaiah which shows that he had caught a glimpse of the true worship man owes to God.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 784.

261. See Luke iv. 30; xxiv. 31; John viii. 59; x. 39.

262. Josh. xix. 9.—It was taken out of Judah's lot.

263. Gen. xxxiii. 17.—When Jacob erected booths on his return from Mesopotamia. Exod. xii. 37.—The Israelites "journeyed from Rameses to Succoth."

264. Joab and Athaliah. See 1 Kings ii. 28—34; 2 Kings xi. 15.

265. In Josh. v. 1 we read: "Until we were passed over;" these words show that the author of the book was there.

266. Exod. xxi. 32.—"If the ox shall push a manservant," the owner shall give "unto his master thirty shekels of silver."

267. 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, and Amos vi. 5, refer to the instruments made by David.

268. 1 Chron. xvi.—When the ark was brought from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David.